

Message Text

SECRET

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15

ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY WARSAW

TO AMEMBASSY PARIS

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S E C R E T WARSAW 7182

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4

TAGS: PFOR, UR, FR, PL

SUBJECT: POLISH EMBASSY OFFICER ON SUCCESSION PROBLEM IN KREMLIN

REF: PARIS 28308

1. WHILE WE ARE UNABLE TO ANSWER THE QUESTION POSED IN THE FINAL SENTENCE OF REF, IT MAY BE RELEVANT TO POINT TO THE EXTRADORDINARY INTEREST WHICH THE POLES HAVE IN THE SUCCESSION QUESTION. ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS, WE HAVE BEEN TOLD AUTHORITATIVELY THAT BREZHNEV HAS A PARTICULARLY SOFT SPOT IN HIS HEART FOR POLAND AND THAT GIEREK HAS BEEN ABLE TO CALL UPON HIM WHEN POLAND HAS RUN INTO DIFFICULTIES AND, THROUGH HIS INTERCESSION, OBTAIN HELP FROM THE USSR WHICH, BY IMPLICATION, WOULD OTHERWISE NOT HAVE BEEN AVAILABLE. CONCOMITANTLY, THERE HAVE BEEN HINTS FROM AUTHORITATIVE POLISH SOURCES THAT REVEAL A STRONG UNEASINESS ABOUT, FIRST, THE POSSIBILITY OF BREZHNEV'S DEPARTURE FROM THE SCENE AND, SECOND, THE UNLIKELIHOOD OF HIS BEING REPLACED BY ANYONE WHOSE ATTITUDE TOWARDS POLAND WILL BE AS FAVORABLE.

2. THE POLES ARE NOW SO SITUATED AS TO MAKE THEIR

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INTEREST IN AND QUALMS ABOUT THE SOVIET SUCCESSION

EVERY BIT AS KEEN AS THOSE WHICH THE YUGOSLAVES USED
TO DISPLAY ABOUT KHRUSHCHEV IN THE YEARS PRECEDING HIS
DISMISSAL. THEY MAY ALSO HAVE A COMPARABLE INTEREST
IN ENCOURAGING WESTERN SPECULATION ABOUT THE DESIRA-
BILITY OF SUPPORTING BREZHNEV AGAINST HIS PUTATIVE
RIVALS AND/OR WOULD-BE SUCCESSORS.
DAVIES

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NNN

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